

REMARKS

Claims 9, 12, 16 and 20 have been amended to resolve an issue raised by the Examiner under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph.

Entry of the above amendment is respectfully requested.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. 112, Second Paragraph

On page 2 of the Office Action, in paragraph 2, claims 9-14, 16, and 20-22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite.

In particular, the Examiner indicates that in independent claims 9, 12, 16, and 20, it is unclear what is meant by “cause no interaction.”

In response, Applicants note that the present application discloses at page 31, lines 5-7 that it is preferable that there is no interaction between the graft polymer present on the surface and the fine particles, and that the present application discloses at page 31, lines 7-9 that fine particles causing no interaction with the hydrophilic functional group or the like of the graft polymer are selected. Accordingly, Applicants have amended independent claims 9, 12, 16, and 20 to change the recitation that the particles “cause no interaction with a hydrophilic functional group of the graft polymer” to recite that the particles “do not interact with a hydrophilic functional group of the graft polymer”.

Applicants submit that one skilled in the art would clearly understand the meaning of the recitation that the particles “do not interact with a hydrophilic functional group of the graft

polymer”. Thus, Applicants submit that the present claims satisfy the requirements of 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, and withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Anticipation Rejection over Kawamura ‘878

On page 3 of the Office Action, in paragraph 3, claims 9-14, 16, and 20-22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Kawamura et al. (US 6,811,878 B2).

In response, Applicants note initially that the Examiner recognizes that the particles ionically bind to the graft surface in Kawamura ‘878 (see page 4, line 6 in the Office Action).

Further, Applicants note that the claims have been amended to recite that that the particles “do not interact with a hydrophilic functional group of the graft polymer”.

Applicants submit that Kawamura ‘878 neither teaches nor suggests the invention as recited in the amended claims, and thus withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Anticipation Rejection over Kawamura ‘029

On page 4 of the Office Action, in paragraph 4, claims 9-14, 16, and 20-22 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Kawamura et al. (US 6,566,029).

In response, Applicants note initially that the Examiner recognizes that Kawamura ‘029 discloses fine particulate polymers such as a thermoplastic fine particulate polymers having a functional group capable of mutually acting with the hydrophilic graft polymer (see page 5, lines 5-6 in the Office Action).

Further, Applicants note that the claims have been amended to recite that that the particles "do not interact with a hydrophilic functional group of the graft polymer".

Applicants submit that Kawamura '029 neither teaches nor suggests the invention as recited in the amended claims, and thus withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

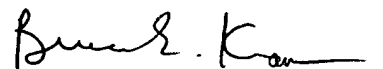
Respectfully submitted,

SUGHRUE MION, PLLC
Telephone: (202) 293-7060
Facsimile: (202) 293-7860

WASHINGTON OFFICE

23373

CUSTOMER NUMBER



Bruce E. Kramer
Registration No. 33,725

Date: January 31, 2007